



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

JEWISH-ARABIC STUDIES*

BY ISRAEL FRIEDLAENDER,

Jewish Theological Seminary of America

EVER since young Abraham Geiger, stimulated by a prize offer of the University of Bonn, first undertook to answer the question: "What did Muhammed adopt from Judaism?"—the inquiry into the relation between Judaism and Islam, by which a long and glorious period in our history is characterized, has occupied a prominent position in modern Jewish research. The subject is, indeed, one of unique fascination. For the relation between Judaism and her younger daughter has been on the whole, despite numerous misunderstandings and disagreements, one of mutual helpfulness and co-operation and free from that jealousy and hostility, marking and marring the contact of Judaism with other religions and cultures, which only knows of domination or subjection and makes the triumph of the one depend on the downfall of the other. The relation between Judaism and Islam is of such particular attraction to the student, because, like every other healthy relation, be it between individuals or communities, it is based on reciproc-

* Dedicated to Professor Ignaz Goldziher, the master in the field of Jewish-Arabic studies, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, June 22, 1910. [The publication of this article has been delayed owing to typographical difficulties.—EDITORS.]

¹ *Was hat Muhammed aus dem Judentume aufgenommen? Ein von der Königl. Preussischen Rheinuniversität gekrönte Preisschrift.* Bonn 1833. The second edition (Leipzig 1902) is an unaltered reprint of the first,—a strange anachronism after 75 years of uninterrupted research!

ity; because it does not consist of mere giving or taking, but is permeated by the principle: *do ut des*. While in its formative period, during the lifetime of Muhammed and, to a much larger extent than generally supposed, in the time after Muhammed,² Islam freely borrows from the parent religion the elements it needs for its up-building and development, it becomes, in turn, after its consolidation, the giver, infusing new life into time-worn Judaism and stimulating it to new efforts and ventures. Neither the investigator of Islam, who endeavors to detect its component parts and primary forces, nor the student of Judaism who traces the influences emanating from it and the elements penetrating into it, can afford to disregard this correlation which has left so profound an impress on the mental development of either religion. As for Jewish scholarship, it can readily point to numerous, more or less systematic, endeavors in this direction, beginning with the first attempt of Geiger down to our own time. A very considerable portion of the stupendous activity of the late Steinschneider was devoted to this task, and among the living it is first and foremost Goldziher who brings his unequalled mastery over the combined dominions of Islam and Judaism to bear upon the study of their mutual relations and, like the hoopoe in the Muhammedan legend, is able to penetrate into depths which are hidden from the gaze of the ordinary student. Yet the field is immeasurable, and unlimited room is left to those of the *minorum gentium* who, conscious of their limitations, yet have the earnest desire of adding their mite to the elucidation of these fascinating problems. In the following the writer begs to submit his contribution towards these Jewish-Arabic studies, which we all have reason

² Cf. Goldziher in *Jewish Encyclopedia* VI 656, article "Islam".

to hope will receive from the new JEWISH QUARTERLY the same generous hospitality which was accorded to them by its predecessor.

I. SHIITIC ELEMENTS IN JEWISH SECTARIANISM

It has long since been recognized³ that the rise of Jewish sectarianism under the dominion of Islam was in a large measure the reflection of a corresponding phenomenon in the Muhammedan world. "In the second half of the seventh century and in the whole of the eighth," says the veteran investigator of Jewish sectarianism⁴, "as a result of the tremendous intellectual commotion produced throughout the Orient by the swift conquests of the Arabs and the collision of victorious Islam with the older religions and cultures of the world, there arose a large number of religious sects, especially in Persia, Babylonia ('Irāk), and Syria. Judaism did not escape the general fermentation; the weak remnants of early schism—the Sadducees and Essenes—picked up new life and flickered once more before their final extinction. But new sects also arose in Judaism, the most important of which were the 'Īsawites (called after their founder Abū 'Īsa), the Yūdḡānites and the Shādḡānites (followers of Yūdḡān and Shādḡān)." This correspondence between Jewish and Muhammedan heterodoxy is, indeed, not to be wondered at. Considering the close contact between Judaism and Islam from the very birth of the latter, it is but natural that their reciprocal influence should not be confined to their main currents, but extend as well to their tributaries and branches. The recognition of this in-

³ Already by Pinsker לקוטי קרמוניות pp. 11, 13, and even earlier by Rappoport in *Kerem Hemed* V (1841) p. 204.

⁴ Harkavy in *Jew. Enc.* I 553^b, article "Anan."

ter-relation, however, has remained an abstract generality and has not been pursued in detail. In view of the great strides which our knowledge of the inner development of Islam has made in recent years, this task becomes more pressing and at the same time more promising in results. A careful study of the points of contact between the Jewish heterodoxy of that period and the corresponding process in Islam will enable us to grasp in its full significance the make-up of these Jewish sects which is otherwise incomprehensible. It will illustrate the saying: "*wie es sich christelt, so jüdet es sich*", which so inimitably characterizes the submissiveness of "emancipated" Jewry to the fads and fancies of its Christian environment, from the Muhammedan point of view. Of course, in confronting Jewish sectarianism with its Islamic predecessor one must guard against exaggerations and not drive analogies to the extreme. The influence of Islam over Judaism has never been of so disintegrating a nature as to suppress all genuine elements of Judaism even in its farthest ramifications. Karaism proper, except for the general condition of religious unrest characteristic of that age, scarcely shows any effect of heterodox Islam. And even the more radical sects, as the 'Īsawites, Yūdḡānites and the like, are largely swayed by halakic interests which are purely Jewish. Yet, with all these restrictions, the influence of Muhammedan heterodoxy on Jewish sectarianism cannot be doubted and presents a phenomenon which is of interest not only for the Jewish scholar but also for the student of comparative religion.

In speaking of Jewish sectarianism, a word must be said about our sources of information. The latter are, indeed, scanty and often fragmentary. Our main source is Kīrkīsāni (wrote in 937), who in the introductory chapters

of his *Kitāb al-anwār*⁵ gives a description of Jewish sects. Kīrkisānī's material is mainly drawn from Dāwud b. Merwān al-Muḥammiṣ (IX. century)⁶, as is also the almost identical account of Hadassi (XII. century)⁷. Valuable material bearing on these early and on some later Jewish movements is contained in the Arabic original of Maimonides' *Iggeret Teman* in the paragraphs dealing with the Pseudo-Messiahs which in the Hebrew translations have been reduced to a few meager sentences^{7a}. To these Jewish sources must be added the detailed account of Shahrastānī (died 1153)⁸ who undoubtedly followed old sources, in this case perhaps Abū 'Īsa al-Warrāk, who is also quoted by Bīrūnī as his authority in Jewish

⁵ Published by Harkavy with a Russian introduction Petersburg 1894 (reprinted from the Memoirs of the Oriental Department of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society volume VIII). See also Bacher in *JQR.*, VII, 687 ff.

⁶ I may incidentally remark that the famous Spanish-Arabic theologian Ibn Ḥazm (died 1064) makes mention of al-Muḥammiṣ. In his *Milal wa'n-Niḥal* III 171, he protests against the view that God only kills those children of whom he knows that they would become sinners, a view held by men

كالفريسي سعيدي بن يوسف والمعمس (read والمقمس) داود بن قزوان
(read المروان) وابراهيم البغدادي واي كثير الطبراني متكلمي

اليهود. If the reading *المقمس* with *s* be correct, then the conjecture of Harkavy (l. l. introduction p. 260 and in the notes to Grätz-Rabinowitz III 498 note 1) who explains the name as "jumper" (from *ḵmṣ*) and applies it to his repeated conversions, could not be accepted.

⁷ *Eshkol ha-kofer* Goslov 1836 fol. 41^c.

^{7a} I refer to a manuscript, apparently a *unicum*, recently purchased from Mr. Ephraim Deinard and presented to the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary by Judge Mayer Sulzberger. I hope to publish this important MS. in the near future.

⁸ Ed. Cureton I 168 f. I collated Cureton's text with four MSS. of the British Museum (Add. 7205; 7251; 23349; 23350). They differ only in details.

matters⁹. Scattered references by Bīrūnī (about 1000)¹⁰, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064), Maḳrīzī (d. 1442), and other Muhammedan writers¹¹ occasionally contain valuable data. The information derived from these sources, however, is not always reliable and is sometimes even contradictory¹²,—an observation by no means surprising to the student of Muhammedan heterodoxy and no doubt applicable to every religious sect which is only known from the description of its opponents. It will therefore be necessary to proceed with caution and discretion and to keep a steady eye on the general conditions and influences which dominate these sects.

Among later sectarian and, what is often identical, Messianic movements in Judaism the heresies of Sabbathai Zebi and Jacob Frank have been found to yield a number of striking illustrations. Occasionally similar movements of minor importance have been referred to. The sources from which our material has been derived will be named in due course.

As far as Muhammedan heterodoxy is concerned, I propose to deal on this occasion with the sects of Shiism, because out of the numerous factions of Islam it is the Shiitic heresy, with its peculiar mixture of doctrinal and political elements, which has more than any other profoundly affected the destinies of Islam and has succeeded in getting

⁹ Shahrastānī quotes al-Warrāk I 141, 143 on Shiitic doctrines, and p. 189, 192 on Manichæan and Mazdakæan heresies. According to p. 189, he was originally a Magian.

¹⁰ Cf. Bīrūnī's *Chronology of Ancient Nations* translated by Sachau pp. 270, 33; 278, 22 and 279, 13, where al-Warrāk's *Kitāb al-Maḳālāt* "Book of Heresies" is quoted. See also p. 431. I have not been able to ascertain the date of al-Warrāk.

¹¹ Cf. Poznański in JQR XVI 770.

¹² See later. Already Pinsker *l. c.* p. 5 *top* refers to this circumstance.

a strong and permanent hold over large sections of the Muhammedan community.

Before entering into the discussion of the relations between the sects of Judaism and those of Shiism, it will be advisable to recapitulate briefly the character and development of Shiism itself. This is the more necessary, as the latter, though figuring among the largest sects in the world, the number of its followers being estimated at 10,000,000, and counting, as it does, among its believers the Persians, "one of the most ancient, gifted, and original peoples in the world",¹³ is yet known but by name to the educated layman and not always grasped in its true character even by the student of the Orient.

Like every other doctrine which extends over various periods and countries, Shiism is a complicated historical phenomenon which cannot be squeezed into a single formula. We shall limit ourselves in the following to the essential features of Shiism, as far as they are apt to illustrate the rise and many of the characteristics of Jewish sectarianism.¹⁴

¹³ Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* I p. IX.

¹⁴ A list of the most important works on Shiism will be found in my treatise "*The Heterodoxies of the Shiites according to Ibn Hazm*," New Haven 1909 (reprinted from the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* vols. xxviii and xxix) II 2-5. I have endeavored to compile in this book, in connection with Ibn Hazm's account of Shiism, the available data from the various sources or, at least, to refer to such. On account of this bibliographical character of the book I have thought it convenient to refer to it in the following to substantiate the expositions in the text. It will be quoted briefly as *Shiites*. To the list given there must be added Browne's *Literary History of Persia* (New York 1902) which in the first volume gives a most graphic and instructive account of the inner life and particularly the religious movements in Persia up to the year 1000. A succinct and masterly presentation of Shiism will be found in Goldziher's *Resumé* on "the Religion of Islam" in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart. Teil I Abteilung III*, 1. *Die orientalischen Religionen* Berlin and Leipzig 1906 p. 119 ff.

Shiism, in Arabic *Shī'a*¹⁵, signifying "party, followers, adherents", is an abbreviation for "*Shī'at 'Alī*," "the party of 'Alī", and originally designates those who believed that 'Alī, the cousin, later the fosterling and son-in-law of the Prophet and one of his earliest and sincerest converts, was the worthiest successor of Muhammed as the Commander of the Faithful and had stronger claims to the leadership of Islam than the first caliphs Abū Bekr, 'Omar, 'Othmān and Mu'āwiya who were elected or accepted in his stead. By extending their sympathies for 'Alī to his descendants, the *ahl al-bait*, "the people (or members) of the (Prophetic) Family," this party confines the rights to the Caliphate within the 'Alidic family, the latter being, in their opinion, worthier of this supreme post than any other, and consequently denies the claims of the Omayyad and 'Abbaside dynasties. This view which bases the claims of 'Alī and the 'Alides to the Caliphate on their worth or merit is the mildest form of Shiism. It is the cardinal doctrine of the *Zaidiyya*—a Shiitic sect which still prevails in Southern Arabia—but is also, slightly modified, accepted by the orthodox community at large, in which the "Members of the Family" have always been the object of reverence and affection.

In sharp contrast to the *Zaidiyya*, the *Imāmiyya*, constituting the bulk of the Shiites of to-day, hold the belief that the Caliphate or, as they prefer to call it, the *Imāmate*¹⁶, is not a matter of personal merit and therefore dependent on election, but is in its very nature hereditary.

¹⁵ Etymologically the same word as post-Biblical סיעה.

¹⁶ The title *Imām* originally applies to the man who stands in the front of the praying congregation and is used by the Shiites as signifying the head of the Muhammedan community.

They maintain that the Prophet left a written will in which he appointed 'Alī his successor and that the Companions¹⁷ of the Prophet who had the election of his successor in hand, out of jealousy and hostility to 'Alī, set aside this will and made it disappear. While the Zaidiyya, accordingly, look upon the elimination of 'Alī merely as an unfortunate mistake in judgment and therefore acquiesce in the election of the first so eminently successful caliphs as a *fait accompli*, the Imāmiyya repudiate¹⁸ the latter as wicked usurpers and place them as well as the other Companions, who, in their opinion, knowingly acted against the express will of the Prophet, on the level of *Kāfirs* or Infidels.

This attitude of the Imāmiyya towards the Companions also determines their relation to the oral tradition of Islam, the *Sunna* or the *Ḥadīth*. For the latter which was gradually considered as binding as the Koran and, with its elasticity and wider range of interests as well as in its immediate effect on practical life, was even superior to the Koran¹⁹, had assumed the shape of oral sayings, uttered by Muhammed or ascribed to him, and necessarily transmitted through one of the Companions. The Shiites, who repudiate the latter as infidels, were therefore in duty bound to reject the Sunna as conceived by the Orthodox or the Sunnites, to whom tradition was inseparable from the Companions, and were, in consequence, faced by the necessity of parting with the major and most vital portion of Muhammedan religion. From this disastrous consequence—for oral tra-

¹⁷ The *Aṣḥāb* or associates of Muhammed who are revered by the orthodox Muhammedans and regarded by them as the only competent transmitters of the oral utterances of the Prophet.

¹⁸ Hence the Imāmiyya and sometimes the Shiites in general are nicknamed *Rawāfiq* or *Rāfiqa*, "repudiators, deserters." Cf. *Shiites* II 137 ff.

¹⁹ Cf. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* II 20.

dition was as indispensable for the growth of Islam as it is for that of any other religious community—, the Shiites were saved by their reverence for the “Members of the Family”. Since their objection to the oral tradition of Islam was not an objection to tradition as such but solely to its bearers as represented by the Companions, they had but to substitute the names of the ‘Alides for those of the Companions in order to secure the blessings of the Prophetic word. It is flagrantly incorrect, therefore, when it is so often maintained that the Shiites are opposed to oral tradition. It is true, they reject the collections of traditions regarded as authoritative by the Sunnites. But they have evolved such collections of their own, which are similar in substance to the orthodox collections and differ from them mainly in the personnel of the bearers of tradition, ‘Ali and his descendants serving as the transmitting link instead of the Companions. “This difference in the authentication of the religious sources has scarcely produced any material changes in the evolution of religious usages. Only in a few insignificant details does the religious *practice* of the Shiites differ from that of the Sunnites.”²⁰

This, as it were, political and purely Islamic essence of Shiism was soon overgrown with two elements from the outside, which were in part also accepted by orthodox Islam but were over-emphasized and driven to their last consequences in Shiism. We refer to the conception of prophecy and the Messianic belief.

²⁰ Goldziher in *Orientalische Religionen* p. 122.—I have dwelt on this point at some length in order to show how superficial and erroneous it is to conceive of Karaism, as is so often done, as a parallel to or even a consequence of Shiism. If one should insist on analogies, then the similarity would rather consist in this that Karaism, like Shiism, has *not* been able to shake off oral tradition altogether.

The conception of prophecy in Islam is, as was recently shown by Goldziher²¹, the outgrowth of Neo-platonic and Gnostic speculations which in the centuries prior to Islam had so profoundly influenced the religious thought of the East.²² It pictures prophecy, as a result of the theory of Emanation, in the form of a "Luminous Substance", first implanted by God in Adam, the immediate product of His creative activity, and then passing among his worthiest descendants from one to the other²³, thus forming a chain of prophets who are the possessors of this Divine Substance²⁴. This conception had forced its way into orthodox Islam. But while according to the latter this "Luminous Substance" found its most perfect and ultimate embodiment in Muhammed whom both Koran and Tradition declare with equal emphasis to be the last of the prophets²⁵, according to the Shiites, this substance passed over from Muhammed to 'Alī and from 'Alī to his descendants, the Imams. The Imams, who were conceived as a dynasty in which son succeeds father, are accordingly vested in Shiism with Divine authority and, as the heirs of the Divine Substance, are raised above the level of human limitations. The outgrowth of this conception was, among other extravagant doctrines, the belief in the infallibility of the Imams and in their Mystic Knowledge, embracing the events of

²¹ *Neuplatonische und gnostische Elemente im Hadīt in Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* XXII 328 ff.

²² See later.

²³ This conception which is the cardinal tenet of most Shiitic sects (see later), also forms the basis of Judah Halevi's theory of the **מגולה** (Book I §§ 47, 95.) See Goldziher, *Le Amr ilāhī (hā'inyān hā-elōhī) chez Juda Halēvi* in *Revue des Études Juives* I, 32 ff. Cf. also *Shiites* II 104.

²⁴ More on this doctrine see later.

²⁵ See Goldziher in *Orientalische Religionen* p. 126, cf. also *Shiites* I 47; II 46 f.

all Past and all Future, little short of Omniscience²⁶. The Imams are consistently regarded as the only legitimate, because God-inspired, source of all truth, both religious and secular, before which the light of reason and research fades into insignificance.²⁷ This conception of the nature of the Imams is dangerously near the point where the Imams become gods, a step which was actually taken by the more radical sections of the Shī'a, the so-called *Gulāt* or "Exaggerators", while the bulk of the Shiites carefully guard against this consequence which is subversive of all Islam and Monotheism.

Of still greater significance for the development and particularly for the external history of Shiism was the second element, the belief in the Messiah or, to use the Muhammedan term, the *Mahdī*.²⁸ This belief in a mysterious personage who is to appear in the fulness of time and, to use the Muhammedan phraseology²⁹, is "to fill the earth with justice as it is now filled with injustice", is not an integral part of orthodox Islam. The Koran makes no

²⁶ See Goldziher l. l. p. 121. On the omniscience of the Imams see *Shiites* II 15 f., 54 f.

²⁷ Cf. the characteristic utterances of Shiitic authorities *Shiites* II 15 f., 54 f.

²⁸ Literally: *the one who is rightly guided*. The root **ه د ي** is used with great frequency in the Koran. But one would rather expect the *active* form *Hādī*, "the one who guides rightly", which is actually found as a title of Mānī, see Flügel, *Mani* p. 306. Husein, the son of 'Alī, is designated as *Hādī Mahdī* in Tabarī, *Annales* II 350, 14. I am inclined to believe that the *passive* form was chosen as an analogy to *Masīh*, the title applied by Muhammed—under Syrian influence—to Christ who was originally identified with the Mahdī (see presently). This would also apply to *Manṣūr* "the one who is helped" (see *Shiites* II 109), a title by which also the Mahdī of the Samaritans is designated (Goldziher in *Zeitschrift der Deutsch-Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* LVI 411 f.).

²⁹ Cf. *Shiites* II 30 f.

mention of the Mahdī³⁰ and even the Hadith is not unequivocal on the subject.³¹ The modern adherents of the orthodox Ḥanafīyya school³² as well as prominent theologians of various schools and ages³³ reject this belief in the Mahdī. Originally the Messianic expectations of Islam were associated with, and limited to, Jesus, who was believed, in consonance with certain Christian teachings, to reappear or "return" at the end of time and fill the earth with justice. In other words, Jesus was to be the Messiah or, as a later utterance ascribed to Muhammed puts it, "there is no Mahdī except 'Īsa the son of Maryam."³⁴ This belief in the "return" of Christ, which is perhaps alluded to in the Koran itself³⁵, was early adopted by all Muhammedans. However, in the beginning of Islam with its glorious activities and triumphs there was little room for the expectation of a Messianic future. It was only after the outbreak of civil strife and the terrible struggle within the Muhammedan community, when the earth seemed to be filled with injustice, that the Messianic hopes turned from abstract speculations into living expectations.³⁶ But the Arabs, filled with national pride and looking down on all non-Arabs as their inferiors, preferred to associate the inauguration of the Messianic age with one of their own blood and faith and so the belief

³⁰ Cf. James Darmsteter, *Le Mahdi* Paris 1885 p. 15; Snouck-Hurgronje, *Der Mahdi* (reprinted from *Revue Coloniale Internationale* vol. I) p. 4.

³¹ Cf. Ibn Khaldūn *Prolegomena* ed. Quatremere II 163 ff., in his admirable presentation of the Mahdī doctrine.

³² Snouck-Hurgronje l. l. pp. 5 and 37.

³³ E. g., the great thinker Ibn Khaldūn (died 1406), cf. note 4. Ibn Ḥazm (died 1064) expresses the opinion that the Mahdī doctrine is an invention of the Persians, *Shiites* I 36.

³⁴ Snouck-Hurgronje l. l. p. 16.

³⁵ *Ibidem* p. 8.

³⁶ Cf. my essay *Die Messiasidee im Islam* in *Festschrift zum siebenzigsten Geburtstage A. Berliner's* p. 122.

in a national Arabic Mahdī displaced the earlier expectation of Jesus who was now reduced to a forerunner and lieutenant of the Mahdī.³⁷

As to the personality of the Mahdī, who was but the embodiment of the ideal qualities of a Caliph, orthodox Muhammedan tradition placed no limitations on his descent, merely insisting on those qualities. The Mahdī was to rise from the midst of the Arabs, later of the Muhammedans in general. The Shiites, however, who regarded the "Members of the Family" as the receptacles of Divine truth and grace, could not consistently accept a Mahdī who was not a descendant of the sacred dynasty.³⁸ Adopting the old Jewish-Christian idea of the "concealment"³⁹ of the Messiah, they identified the Mahdī with certain historical personages who had already appeared in life and who would, similarly to the "return" of Jesus, reappear or return to fill the earth with justice. This belief became the motive power in all Shiitic movements and revolutions. Every "Member of the Family" thus became a candidate for the post of the Mahdī and there was scarcely an 'Alide whose reappearance or "return" was not looked for by one sect or another. Out of the innumerable Shiitic sects and factions which owe

³⁷ Darmsteter l. l. p. 13, Snouck-Hurgronje l. l. p. 14. In early Islam even separate tribes and families expected a Mahdī from their own midst. See on these national-Arabic Messiahs van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe, le Chiitisme et les croyances messianiques sous le Khalifat des Omayyades*, Amsterdam 1894, p. 60 ff. and Snouck-Hurgronje l. l. p. 11 note 1.

³⁸ There is a tradition, forged of course, to the effect that "there will be no Mahdī except from the members of my Family." Among the numerous parallels between Judaism and Shiism quoted in the anthology of Ibn 'Abd-Rabbihi (died 940) from older sources (*al-'iḡd al-farīd* Cairo 1293H I 269) the following similarity is pointed out: "The Jews say, the king can only be from the family of David. The Rāfida (=Shiites) say, the king can only be from the family of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib."

³⁹ *Shiites* II 28. More about it later.

their origin to this expectation, I will single out two which are the most important and at the same time the most characteristic, being based on arithmetic speculations. Sacred numbers, especially 7 and 12, play an important part in Shiitic heterodoxy,⁴⁰ and they constantly recur under various forms. Hence we find on the one hand the *Sab'iyya*, the "Seveners,"⁴¹ who accept as the Mahdī Ismā'īl b. Ja'far, the *seventh* Imam after 'Alī, a sect which under the name of Ismailites and Karmatians was of such tremendous consequences in the history of Islam and eventually led to the establishment of the Fatimide caliphate⁴². On the other hand we meet the *Ithnā'ashariyya*, the "Twelvers,"⁴³ believing in the *twelfth* Imam, a certain Muhammed b. al-Ḥasan (born about 872) who disappeared as a child and who is expected to return as the Mahdī in the fulness of time⁴⁴. This expectation forms the cardinal doctrine of the Imāmiyya who practically represent the whole of Shiism of the present day⁴⁵.

The further spread and development of Shiism is determined by the early conquests of Islam and the gradual shifting of the Islamic center into the domain of Persian civilization. It is generally believed and was up till recently

⁴⁰ See *Shiites Index* s. v. *Seven* and *Ithnā'ashariyya*. Cf. Browne, *Literary History of Persia* I 310. On these numbers as well as on the number 19 see later.

⁴¹ Browne l. l. p. 391 ff.

⁴² A very elaborate account of this movement will be found in de Goeje's *Mémoire sur les Carmathes du Bahrain et les Fatimides*. Second edition. Leyden 1886, p. 23.

⁴³ Cf. *Shiites Index* s. h. v.

⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥazm (*Shiites* I 48, 76, cf. II 53) maintains that this Mahdī was never born. Houtsma (in a private communication) is inclined to agree with Ibn Ḥazm.

⁴⁵ In orthodox Islam, however, the Mahdī gradually assumed the function of destroying the infidels, Snouck-Hurgronje l. l. p. 25.

asserted by scholars that Shiism is Persian in origin. This view can no more be upheld. The doctrines discussed above come from different sources, and recent investigation⁴⁶ has shown that the founders and earliest exponents of Shiism were not Persians. But there can be no doubt that the Persians were exceptionally ripe for the teachings of Shiism. The hereditary nature of the Imamate appeared to the Persians as a matter of course. The election of a king seemed to them impossible and utterly preposterous⁴⁷. The conception of the Imams as the heirs and possessors of the Divine "Luminous Substance" found its counterpart in the Persian conception of royalty as the possessors of the "*far-rukhi-Kayāni*", "the Royal Splendor"⁴⁸, or the "*farri yaz-dān*", "the Divine Glory" conceived in the form of a subtle flame⁴⁹. The belief in a Mahdī who is to inaugurate the Golden Age found its parallel in similar Persian conceptions of a *Saoshyant*, a Savior,⁵⁰ and in the more definite expectation of the "return" of the mythical *Bahrām Hamāvand*⁵¹.

⁴⁶ Especially Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien im alten Islam*, Berlin 1901 p. 90 ff., whose main thesis is accepted by Goldziher in *Orientalische Religionen* p. 119. I may also refer to my article 'Abdallah b. Sabā, der Begründer der Schi'a, und sein jüdischer Ursprung in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* voll. xxiii and xxiv.

⁴⁷ Cf. Browne l. l. 130.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem* p. 128.

⁴⁹ Darmsteter, *Le Mahdi* p. 22.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem* p. 26.

⁵¹ Blochet, *Le Messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie Musulmane*, Paris 1903 p. 126 ff. In support of Blochet's thesis I may mention that Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal wa'n-Nihāl* I 139 refers briefly to "the expectation on the part of the Persian Magians of Bahrām Hamāvand, the rider of the cow;" similarly I 116 l. 6: "when B. H. will have appeared on the cow to bring back their kingdom". The Southern Arabian writer Nashwān (quoted by D. H. Müller, *Die Burgen und Schlösser Südarabiens. Sitzungsberichte der philos.-hist. Classe der Kaiserl. Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien* 1879, p. 407 note 6) speaks instead of Bahrām Gūr, the Sasanian King.

This dogmatic affinity between Persian and Shiitic ideas was powerfully assisted by political circumstances. The Persians, who with the rapidity of lightning had been turned from lords into slaves, eagerly embraced Islam, largely because the new religion promised its converts equality of treatment and opportunity. In this, however, they were bitterly disappointed. Instead of equality and remuneration, they met from the Arabs and the Omayyads, who represented them, with contempt and oppression⁵². They were thus driven into the arms of the opposition and, since the opposition to the Omayyad dynasty centered around the 'Alides who were regarded as the rightful claimants to the Caliphate, the Persians joined the *Shi'at 'Alī*, the "party of 'Alī", i. e. became Shiites⁵³. This political character of the opposition could not but have, in turn, an immediate effect on the religious development of the Persians. Islam was meant to be a universal religion. But having arisen in the seclusion of the Arabic peninsula, it could not disguise, and in the early period of the Arabic conquests it wilfully emphasized, its Arabic character. The hatred which the Persians bore towards the Arabs as their conquerors and oppressors could not but affect their sentiments towards Islam as represented by the Arabs⁵⁴. Bound up, as they were, with Islam which they could no more abandon⁵⁵, they began to refashion it and to foist upon it all the doctrines and traditions they had cherished heretofore. Thus Shiism, being a protest against orthodox Islam as represented by the Arabs, became the receptacle of all the re-

⁵² See especially Browne I. I. p. 232 ff. who largely follows van Vloten.

⁵³ Although official Shiism was introduced into Persia much later.

⁵⁴ Cf. *Shiites*, Introduction I 2. Ibn Ḥazm clearly saw and expressed this relationship, *ibidem* I 35 ff., cf. II 16 f.

⁵⁵ Apostasy in Islam is punishable by death.

ligious influences that had been dominant in the former Persian Empire.

These influences were as varied in character as they were different in origin. For the old Persian Empire⁵⁶ had for centuries been the battle-ground of numerous conflicting cultures. The ancient religion of Babylon still exerted its influence, surviving in various sects, such as the Mandæans⁵⁷, and transmitted through other channels. The religion of Zoroaster had reigned supreme for centuries. Persia was the home of Manichæism which, despite all persecutions, still had numerous adherents and spread its powerful influence far beyond the boundaries of Persia⁵⁸. The tenets of Mazdak outlived the destruction of its believers and continued as an important spiritual factor⁵⁹. The neo-Platonic and Gnostic doctrines, which very early asserted their influence through the medium of the above sects, had been, as it were, personally introduced in the middle of the sixth century through the exiled philosophers of Byzantium.⁶⁰ Among these agencies must also be counted the ancient paganism or the so-called Sabæism of Ḥarrān, whose adherents were also largely represented in 'Irāk⁶¹, not to speak of the great Jewish and Christian centers and perhaps Hindoo influences⁶². All these variegated elements, often in

⁵⁶ Including of course, Irāk (Babylonia). We know that this province had many Persian inhabitants, and was entirely under the influence of Persian culture. In Arabic times Persian was still spoken in the markets of Kufa (*Zeitschrift der deutsch-morgenländischen Gesellschaft* xxxviii, 392) and a Shiitic impostor of the same city had the audacity to maintain that, when he ascended to heaven, he was addressed by God in *Persian* (*Shiites* II 90 l. 22).

⁵⁷ On Mandæan influences in Shiism cf. *Shiites* II 82 ff., 84, 87.

⁵⁸ See especially Browne l. l. p. 154 ff.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem* p. 166 ff.

⁶⁰ Nöldeke, *Aufsätze zur persischen Geschichte* p. 114.

⁶¹ Chwolson, *Ssabier* I 482 ff.

⁶² On the assumption of Hindoo influence on Islam see Browne l. l. p.

a modified or mutilated shape, found expression in a motley multitude of Shiitic sects with a weird mixture of all possible doctrines and practices which were artificially harmonized with the official religion by means of allegorical interpretation.

These sects are a characteristic feature of the history of Islam in Persia from the Arabic conquest down to modern times. We have seen that the motive power in all these sectarian movements was the Persian resentment against Arabic rule and oppression. Hence these movements were never purely doctrinal but were at the same time political and, in accordance with the spirit of the age, Messianic or Mahdistic. They were revolutionary in character and were directed against the government. The proper beginning of these movements may be said to coincide with the beginning of the second Muhammedan century, when the end of the first century of the dominion of the new religion had reawakened eschatological expectations in all sections of Islam, when the fruits of the Omayyad oppression had begun to ripen and when, above all, the subterranean propaganda of the 'Alides, shortly before organized, had grown to be a powerful factor in political life⁶³. Most of these early sects make their appearance in Kufa⁶⁴ which had once been the capital under 'Ali⁶⁵ and was now the center of the Shiitic propaganda. With the shifting of this propaganda into the eastern provinces of Persia, the Shiitic sects move also eastward. These sectarian movements become more and more numerous with the growing weakness of the Omayyad government. The end of

⁶³ Cf. van Vloten l. l. p. 44 ff.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Shiites* Index s. v. *Kufa*.

⁶⁵ Cf. Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien* p. 56.

the Omayyad period presents an uninterrupted chain of such uprisings and revolutions. The scattered attempts are now organized by Abū Muslim, "the Master of the Propaganda", into one great movement which is centered in Khorāsān and finally leads to the overthrow of the Omayyads. The revolutionary movement had been started and conducted in the name of the 'Alides. But by a dexterous move the 'Abbasides displaced the "Members of the Family". New uprisings follow, led by the Persians Sinbād (757 C. E.),⁶⁶ Ustadsīs (766-768)⁶⁷, Muḡanna' (777-780)⁶⁸, Bābak (816-838)⁶⁹, and others, and combining heterodox teachings with revolutionary, and what is identical, Messianic tendencies. Gradually, however, these movements lose their political revolutionary character. With the 'Abbasides, who were themselves half Persians⁷⁰, the Persian element gradually gets the upper hand. The resentment against the Arabs dies away and the sects henceforward, as far as Persia is concerned, assume a purely doctrinal aspect.

These tremendous upheavals in the eastern dominions of Islam form the background on which stands out the corresponding movement in Judaism. In the light of the historical conditions, as briefly sketched above, the rise of Jewish sectarianism under Islamic dominion assumes a larger aspect and a deeper significance. Time, place, and character of this movement receive their proper historical setting.

⁶⁶ See Blochet, *Le Messianisme dans l'hétérodoxie Musulmane* p. 44 f. Browne l. l. p. 313 f.

⁶⁷ Browne, l. l. p. 317.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem* p. 318 ff.; *Shītes* II 120 ff.

⁶⁹ Browne l. l. p. 323 ff.

⁷⁰ Their mothers were mostly of Persian blood.

It is certainly not accidental that the rise of Jewish sectarianism under Islam belongs to the same period which forms a turning point in the history of Islam and Shiism, marked by the struggle between the Omayyad government and the forces opposed to it. The earliest⁷¹ representatives of Jewish sectarianism were Abū 'Īsa of Ispahan—his first name is not certain⁷²—and his followers the 'Īsawiyya, or Iṣfahāniyya⁷³. The date of Abū 'Īsa's appearance is differently transmitted by Kīrkisānī and Shahrastānī. According to the former, "his appearance took place in the days of 'Abdalmelik, the son of Merwān,"⁷⁴ who reigned 685-705. Shahrastānī, however, circumstantially relates that "he lived in the time of Manṣūr (754-775), but his propaganda began in the time of the last king of the Omayyads, Merwān b. Muhammed al-Ḥimār (744-750)"⁷⁵ and

⁷¹ The movement of Serene in Syria stands entirely apart. See later p. 211.

⁷² According to Kīrkisānī (in several places) and Hadassi his Jewish name was Obadiah. Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal wa'n-Niḥal* I 99 l. 11 says: "it has reached me that his name was Muhammad b. 'Isa." This combination of the names of Jesus and Muhammed is most probably an afterthought, cf. Poznański in JQR. xvi 770. Shahrastānī calls him Iṣḥāk b. Ya'qūb and adds: "but it is said that his name was 'Ufīd Alūhim." The latter is undoubtedly עובד אלהים and identical with Obadiah. The form of the name is very strange. I am inclined to think that the Jews of Ispahan or those who are responsible for Shahrastānī's data refrained from pronouncing יהוה and used instead אלהים.

⁷³ The first form is the most frequent and is used by all Arabic writers. Kīrkisānī prefers the second form, cf. p. 284, 11 (where a variant reads 'Īsawiyya) and in the Manuscript of the British Museum Or. 2524 fol. 33^b. Similarly Hadassi העיסוניים. Iṣfahāniyya or, more correctly, Iṣbāniyya is found in Maḥrizī, *Khiṭaṭ* (ed. Cairo) IV 372 l. 18 and in Su'udī (wrote 1535), *Disputatio pro religione Mohammedanorum contra Christianos* Leiden 1890 p. 189.

⁷⁴ Kīrkisānī 284, 6. This statement is left out by Hadassi. Did David al-Muḥammiṣ have it?

⁷⁵ Shahrastānī I 168.

then narrates,⁷⁶ how he and his army were killed by Manṣūr at Rai (near Teheran). Grätz⁷⁷, who did not know Ẹırķisānī, follows Shahrastānī. Harkavy⁷⁸ unhesitatingly accepts Ẹırķisānī's statement and bases on the earlier appearance of Abū 'Īsa the conjecture that he influenced the rise of Karāism. It is, however, impossible to follow Ẹırķisānī. The historical conditions decidedly speak against it. The systematic outbreaks of Shiitic sectarianism in 'Irāk and the other Persian provinces did not, owing to the causes indicated above, take place before the reign of Hishām (724-743=105-125 Hijra), the son of 'Abdalmelik⁷⁹. And even then the uprisings were of small dimensions⁸⁰; they were quickly put down by the Omayyad governors and they scarcely affected the Caliphate to such a degree as to make it possible for a Jew to gather an army and resist the government. Particularly the reign of 'Abdalmelik, despite frequent skirmishes with the Khārijites in the East, which, however, were local,⁸¹ was characterized by strength and discipline. On the other hand, the date given by Shahrastānī agrees most perfectly with the historical circumstances. Under the last Omay-

⁷⁶ Prefacing it by *wa-ḵīla* "and it is said".

⁷⁷ *Geschichte* V³ 404.

⁷⁸ In his introduction to Ẹırķisānī p. 277, also in his notes to Grätz-Rabinowitz III 502.

⁷⁹ Cf. the movements of Khidāsh (on him and similar rebels see Wellhausen, *Des arabishe Reich* p. 315 ff.), Muḡira, Bayān, Abū Manṣūr, Abū 'l-Khaṭṭāb, and the numerous factions of the Khattābiyya (see on all these *Shiites* Index), nearly all contemporaneous, in the first half of the second Muhammedan century. The rebellion of Mukhtār (died 67 = 687) nearly half a century earlier (Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien* p. 74 ff.) was of a different character. Moreover, it did not affect Persia proper.

⁸⁰ See, e. g., *Shiites* II 79 l. 36. This is the impression one gets throughout from the accounts on the sects of this period.

⁸¹ Cf. August Müller, *Der Islam im Morgen- und Abendland* I 389.

yad Muhammed b. Merwān the 'Alidic propaganda which had till then been undermining the Empire, especially in the East, broke out openly. With the moment when Abū Muslim, the chief of the propagandist forces, unfurled the black standard of the 'Abbasides in a village near Merv (June 9, 747), Persia became a seething caldron of anarchy and revolution. It was, as Wellhausen⁸² puts it, "a time of adventurers and men of pluck," and Abū Muslim was often compelled to fight the latter, as he did the forces of the Omayyad government. One of these adventurers was Bihāfarīd,⁸³ who rose in Nīsābūr preaching ancient Persian doctrines and was put to death by Abū Muslim. Another sectarian, who is of immediate interest to us, was 'Abdallāh b. Mu'āwiya⁸⁴ who rebelled in Kufa *against the last Omayyad*, combining political claims with extravagant doctrines. He was forced to retreat into the East, where he formed an independent empire and even struck his own coins, and settled temporarily in Ispahan. He was put to death by Abū Muslim in 129 H (=747 C. E). But centuries later there were still people who believed that 'Abdallāh was concealed in the mountains of Ispahan and would return thence to fill the earth with justice. Abū Muslim himself was not merely a political agitator but also the representative, at least the object, of certain extravagant doctrines. There was a sect named after him the Muslimiyya⁸⁵ which believed in his Divine nature and expected his "return" as the Messiah. When Abū Muslim had been treacherously murdered by Manšūr (February 12, 755), fresh revolts, headed

⁸² *Das arabische Reich* p. 231.

⁸³ Browne l. l. p. 308 ff.

⁸⁴ *Shiites* II 44 ff. Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich* p. 239 f.; 311.

⁸⁵ See *Shiites* Index s. v. *Abū Muslim*.

by Sinbād, Ustadsīs, Muḵanna', and others,⁸⁶ broke out to avenge his death, and they were encountered and put down by Manṣūr. In the chaotic condition of the empire caused by the resurrection of Abū Muslim, perhaps during the short-lived glory of 'Abdallah b. Mu'āwiya it was quite possible for a Jew of a courageous temperament and Messianic aspirations to gether in Ispahan, which was a strong Jewish center,⁸⁷ a Jewish army⁸⁸. Abū 'Īsa was probably able to keep up an attitude of independence during the uncertain reign of the first 'Abbaside as-Saffāḥ (750-754) and was put down, with many other sectarians, by the energetic Manṣūr⁸⁹.

The rôle of Persia as the home of Jewish sectarianism is also easily accounted for by historical conditions.

⁸⁶ See *supra* p. 202. On Iṣḥāk "the Turk" cf. Browne I. 1. p. 314 f.

⁸⁷ It was supposed to have been founded by Jews. The older city was called *Yahūdiyya*. Cf. *Jewish Encyclopedia* VI 659^b f. s. v. Ispahan.

⁸⁸ Shahrastānī I 168: **فَاتَّبَعَهُ بَشَرٌ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ** "a large crowd of Jews followed him." According to Maimonides (*Iggeret Tēmān*, Lichtenberg *Kobez*, II p. 7^b), Abū 'Īsa was followed by 10,000 Jews **וַיֵּצֵא בְכָלל** **עֶשְׂרֵת אֲלָפִים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל** is **בְּכָלל** **בְּחֵבֶל** = "in the company of." Grätz' emendation (V⁸ 405 l. 13) is unnecessary). ẖīrḳisānī says (284, 7): **וַתִּבְעֶה קוֹם וְצָאָר** "and people followed him, so that there was an army with him and he was encountered in battle and killed." This does not contradict the statement of the same ẖīrḳisānī in his refutation of Abū 'Īsa (MS. British Museum Or. 2524 fol. 34^c)—which I hope to publish later—that "in the beginning of his career only a few persons followed him in affirming his prophecy." Shahrastānī, too, speaks of his *da'wa* (propaganda) and it is quite possible that many joined his army who did not believe in his prophetic character.

⁸⁹ This does not contradict Maimonides' words (*ibidem*) **בְּתַחֲלָה** **מַלְכוּת וְשִׁמְעוֹנִי עֶמְדָּה** which Harkavy (introduction to ẖīrḳisānī p. 227) quotes in support of an earlier date. Maimonides who lived in the sixth century of the Hijra could very well speak of an event which took place about 130 H. as is the "beginning" of the Muhammedan dominion. I may remark here that although,—because of the mention of Ispahan,—one is reluctant

The sects of Shiism first rise in 'Irāk, especially in Kufa, and gradually move to the eastern Persian provinces. When we examine the long list of Jewish sectarians contained in Kīrkisānī's account,⁹⁰ we find, as was long ago observed by Harkavy,⁹¹ that their *gentilicia*, with very few exceptions, point to inner Persia. We encounter such designations as Iṣfahānī, 'Okbarī (twice), Nahāwendī, Za'farānī, Tiflīsī, Damaḡānī, or Kūmisī, to which may also be added names like Yūdḡān, Shādakān or Shārakān,⁹² and Mūshkān,⁹³ of

to detach Maimonides' words from Abū 'Isa's appearance, there are difficulties in the way of this identification. בעבר הנהר (the Hebrew expression is also used in the Arabic original) can in my opinion be nothing else but *Mā warā an-nahr*, the Arabic name for Transoxania. The biblical meaning of הנהר as Euphrates is scarcely in accordance with the style of the translator of this letter. Besides, the designation of Ispahan, whose position must have been known to Maimonides, as "beyond the Euphrates", is a rather curious geographical definition. Maimonides' further statement **ואתה האות שלו של מצורע ושנים בריא** contradicts Kīrkisānī (284, 10; 311, 20) who narrates that his "miracle of legitimation" consisted in his producing books, despite his being illiterate, a fact to which Kīrkisānī often refers in his (unpublished) polemics against the 'Isawiyya. Grätz V³ 156 has misunderstood the latter statement, which he knew from Hadassi, and refers the former miracle to Abū 'Isa, without even mentioning the difficulty. It is not impossible that that stirring period,—"the East was then without a master and he who laid hands on, had the power" (Wellhausen, *Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien* p. 98)—saw many more Jewish Messianic movements of which we know nothing. I shall revert to this point later in these STUDIES.

⁹⁰ p. 284-285.

⁹¹ *Revue des Études Juives* V 208.

⁹² The Muhammedan theologian Baḡdādī (died 1038) in his *Kitāb al-farḡ* (MS. Berlin No. 2800, cf. *Shiites* I 26 f.) mentions, alongside of the 'Isawiyya, the Shārakāniyya (sic), supposedly (cf. note 3), named after their founder Shārakān (fol. 4^a; this passage was discussed and published by Schreiner in *Revue des Études Juives* XXIX 206 ff.). In another passage (fol. 92^b), however, not mentioned by Schreiner, the same sect is

spelt **شاذكانية** Shādakāniyya. Schreiner (*ibidem* p. 207) rightly supposes that this sect is identical with the **שאדאכאנייה** mentioned by Yefet b. 'Alī (in Pinsker's *Likḡute* p. 26. The Arabic *kāf* in these names is the Persian *gāf*.

⁹³ Shahrastānī I 169. The name of the sect and its supposed (see follow

Persian Jews a ready victim to all possible heresies which were set afloat by ambitious sectarians and, because rooted in ancient Persian tradition, were eagerly grasped by the Persian population⁹⁸.

The character of Jewish sectarianism is sufficiently determined by the above expositions: it is exotic and in the main the reflection of Muhammedan, more correctly Shiitic, heterodoxy, as manifested in Persia, and presenting a combination of doctrinal and political, or Messianic, tendencies. In defending this proposition which apparently is also implied in the remarks of Harkavy quoted in the beginning of our expositions,⁹⁹ we cannot ignore an essentially different theory, set forth by Grätz with his usual force and fascination. According to Grätz, Jewish sectarianism owes its origin rather to the Jews of Arabia, who had been exiled by Muhammed. "The origin of this [sectarian] movement," says Grätz,¹⁰⁰ "which divided the Jewish commonwealth of the East and West into two camps, dates from the first Gaonic century¹⁰¹. The Babylonian Talmud held sway over the Jewish community in Babylonia. . . By the expansion of the Islamic dominion...the authority of the Talmud was extended far beyond its original bounds... The Babylonian-Persian¹⁰² communities felt in no wise hampered by the Talmudical ordinances which were of their own creation and had sprung up in their midst... Not so,

⁹⁸ Kirkisāni (316, 2) expressly states that "the heresies were numerous among the (Jewish) inhabitants of Jibāl, i. e. Media." Interesting in this connection is the list of heresies enumerated by Yefet b. 'Alī in Pinsker's *Liḳḳute* p. 26. More about it later.

⁹⁹ p. 185.

¹⁰⁰ *Geschichte* V³ 151; English translation III 118 f.

¹⁰¹ Here the German edition offers a somewhat guarded sentence which is left out in the English translation.

¹⁰² The German edition merely has: the Babylonian.

however, with the Arabian Jews who had emigrated from Arabia to Palestine, Syria, and Irak, the Benu Kainukaa, the Benu Nadhir and the Chaibarites. They were sons of the desert, men of the sword, soldiers, and warriors, accustomed from their childhood to a free life and to the development of their strength; men who cultivated social intercourse with their former Arabic allies and fellow-soldiers in whose midst they again settled after the conquest of Persia and Syria. Judaism was indeed dear to them... But between the Judaism which they practised in Arabia and the Judaism taught by the Talmud and set up as a standard by the Babylonian colleges, there lay a deep gulf. To conform to Talmudical precepts, it would have been necessary for them to renounce their genial familiarity with their former comrades and to give up their drinking-bouts with the Arabs which, despite their interdiction by the Koran, the latter greatly loved. In a word, they felt themselves hampered by the Talmud... But from whatever cause this aversion to Talmudical precepts may have arisen, it is certain that it first had its origin in the Arabian-Jewish colony in Syria or Irak."

This construction of Grätz with all its numerous implications is wholly unacceptable. To begin with, the home and the center of Jewish sectarianism is, as we have just seen, not 'Irāk or Syria, but Persia. The movement of Serene which, according to our data, took place in Syria,¹⁰⁸ more correctly in Northern Syria,¹⁰⁴ stands entirely isolated¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁸ Grätz V³ 401 f.

¹⁰⁴ I infer this from the name of the founder. Serene שרני (the reading שרניע is not a variant but a misprint) is neither Hebrew nor Arabic nor Persian. Brüll in *Jahrbücher für jüdische Geschichte und Litteratur* 1889 p. 119 rightly suggests that שרני was but a by-name, his first name being סעורא or זעורא. In analogy to the name of other sectarians we expect a

and the data about it are very scanty¹⁰⁶ and contain much that appears very strange¹⁰⁷. The few hundred Arabian Jews

gentilicium with the ending *ī*. Fürst (quoted by Brüll *ibidem*) suggests the derivation from Sirin in Galilee. Since, however, all the sources agree that he rose in Syria (Grätz *ibidem*) and the Byzantian writers call him simply *τῆς Συρίας* I would rather propose to pronounce his name *Suryānī* "the

Syrian" (سُورْيَانِي, سُورْيَانِي = שְׂרִינִי). On the transcription of *sīn* through ש cf. *Revue des Études Juives* XXXII 144.) The original Arabic name, for Syria was *Sha'm*. But this designation was gradually limited to Southern Syria. Evidence of the above use of the Arabic word in the period under consideration is found in a Gaonic responsum (Harkavy's *Responsum* p. 230):

סוריא כמה מדינות היא כגון דמשק וחלב ומבוק ועד חרן אותן מקומות שעל עליוני

פרת קרויין סוריא ושמה בלשון ישמעאלי סוריאיה ולשון סורסי וכתב סורסי שהוא

עכשו ביד נצרים בבבל וקוראין אותו סוריאני על שם אותו מקום הוא נקרא

(cf. Ginzberg, *Geonica* II 174). The same differentiation between *Sha'm* and *Sha'mī*, South Syria and Southern Syrian, and *Sūriyya* and *Suryānī* (or *Sūri*), North Syria and Northern Syrian, is, as a competent Palestinian friend informs me, still ordinarily used in the East at the present day.—Poznański, JQR. VIII 699 note 1 derives the name from Shirin (שְׂרִינִי = שְׂרִינִי near Karmesin in Persia). If this be correct—which, on the strength of the available material, I am inclined to doubt—this would only strengthen the thesis defended in the text.

¹⁰⁶ It is difficult to say whether the remnants of the 'Isāwīyya which, as Kīrkisānī (284, 11, 317, 6; also MS. British Museum Or. 2524 fol. 34^a) narrates, were still to be found in *Damascus* in the time of this writer had any connection with Serene and his movement. Kīrkisānī also mentions a sectarian from *Ramla* (285, 13). See Schreiner in REJ. XXIX 207. On the sect of Meswi of *Baalbek* see Grätz V³ 450.

¹⁰⁷ The only information about his tenets is contained in a few words in a responsum of the Gaon Natronai in the collection שְׂעָרֵי צֶדֶק p. 24^a. See Grätz V³ 401 f. This Natronai is not, as Grätz thinks, Natronai I (about 719), but, as was pointed out by Brüll, *Jahrbücher für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* 1889 p. 119 and Ginzberg *Geonica* I 50 note 1, Natronai II (859-869). The Gaon plainly refers to the *Karaites* and characterizes them as opponents of the Talmud. Since he distinguishes them from the followers of Serene, it is not permissible to emphasize so strongly the anti-Talmudic character of the latter and to use it as a basis for further deductions, as is done by Grätz.

¹⁰⁷ It is scarcely credible that the Jews of Spain should have been affected by an obscure sectarian in Syria to such an extent as to leave all

of the Banū Keinuḡaa and Banū Nādīr, who, when expelled by Muhammed, settled in Southern Syria,¹⁰⁸ could scarcely, ignorant nomads that they were,¹⁰⁹ have prompted a new religious movement. The bulk of the Arabian Jews, consisting of the Khaibarites, were settled in Kufa.¹¹⁰ But their presence in 'Irāq, except for their influence on Muhammedan theologians,¹¹¹ left no trace whatever. Nor can the anti-Talmudic character of the Arabian Jews be conceded so easily. We know but very little about the inner condition of the Arabian Jews at the time of Muhammed. But to judge by what Islam borrowed from them, they must have been deeply influenced by Talmudic tradition.¹¹² Moreover, we have positive evidence that those Jews who remained in Arabia submitted to the authority of the Geonim.¹¹³ But it is above all a mistaken notion to seek the source of Jewish or Eastern sectarianism in considerations of ease and convenience. Antinomianism has never been a creative force in the religious development of the East. It is true, the

their property which was confiscated by the government, and that neither Kīrkisānī nor any other Jewish writer should know anything about it.

¹⁰⁸ Grätz V³. p. 99-100, Caetani, *Annali dell' Islam* I p. 523.

¹⁰⁹ On the ignorance of the Arabian Jews cf. Geiger, *Was hat Muhammed aus dem Judentum aufgenommen* p. 10. The fact of the nomadic and, in consequence, uncultured condition of the Jews in Hījāz is pointed out and utilized for his philosophy of history by Ibn Khaldūn (died 1406) in his *Prolegomena* II 212, 461.

¹¹⁰ Grätz I. l. 108.

¹¹¹ Cf. Lidzbarski, *De propheticiis, quae dicuntur, legendis arabicis*, Leipzig 1893 p. 28 f.

¹¹² Cf. Geiger, *Was hat Muhammed aus dem Judentum aufgenommen* p. 9 f. Different in character and origin was Southern Arabic or Hīmyaric Judaism in Yemen, cf. Z. Frankel in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* II (1853) 451. On this Southern, probably non-Talmudic, Judaism see the second part of my article on 'Abdallah b. Sabā in *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* vol. XXIV.

¹¹³ See my Note on "The Jews of Arabia and the Gaonate" in this volume.

adoption of "allegorical interpretation" has often led to libertinism or, as the Muhammedans call it, the "*istiḥlāl al-muḥarramāt*," "the permission of forbidden things."¹¹⁴ But it was a consequence, not a motive. A religion without definite religious obligations has few chances for becoming popular in the East. James Darmsteter¹¹⁵ is even of the opinion that the rapid conversion of the Persians from Zoroastrism to Islam was due to the fact that the former, with all its burdensome purification rites, "was on the other hand as hostile as possible to that spirit of asceticism which the people always love to see in their religion." Manichæism and Mazdakism, which arose as a protest against Zoroastrism, are decidedly ascetic, and the same ascetic spirit is characteristic of most Muhammedan heterodox sects. The same holds good in the case of Jewish sectarianism. The Karaitic schism was, as Weiss¹¹⁶ has convincingly shown, not a protest against the restrictions of rabbinical tradition, but, on the contrary, against its alleviations. Early Karaism was strongly ascetic and so were the sects of Abū 'Īsa, Yūdḡān, and the like. And if it be admitted that the Arabian Jews gave birth to Jewish sectarianism, because, among other grievances, they found it difficult "to give up their drinking-bouts with the Arabs," they would indeed have made but a poor exchange: for Abū 'Īsa and Yūdḡān, among other ascetic restrictions, forbade the drinking of wine altogether.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ See *Shiites* Index s. v. *Precepts*. It must be borne in mind, however, that libertinism is a favorite, often unfounded charge against sectarians in all religions.

¹¹⁵ *Le Mahdi* p. 19 f., cf. also Browne l. l. p.

¹¹⁶ *Dor dor we-dorshow* IV⁴ 65.

¹¹⁷ See later.

The acceptance of a later date for the appearance of Abū ʿĪsa and his disciple Yūdḡān¹¹⁸ makes it highly improbable that the founder of Karaism who rose very soon afterwards should have been influenced by them to any appreciable extent. It is altogether difficult to assume that a man of the deep learning and the high social standing of Anan should have succumbed to the influence of these sectarians who were very ignorant¹¹⁹ and occupied a very low social position.¹²⁰ The character of this type of Jewish sectarianism and the Karaitic schism is indeed entirely different. Karaism is *anti*-Talmudic. It is based on a definite system of interpretation and presupposes a community of scholars and a highly developed Talmudic culture. The heterodoxy of Abū ʿĪsa and others like him is not directed against the Talmud. If we are to believe Ẹirḡisānī,¹²¹ Abū ʿĪsa placed the Rabbinical sages on almost the same level with the prophets.¹²² This heterodoxy affects likewise Biblical and Talmudical ordinances and has, besides, a strong Messianic character. As its bearers we have to picture to ourselves a community of simple-minded uneducated Jews, removed from the center of Talmudic learning and unable to grasp the intricacies of the Halakah, an easy prey to Messianic adventurers and the influences of the non-Jewish surroundings. The Karaitic secession therefore is an inner-Jewish movement. It owes the outside world nothing ex-

¹¹⁸ Yūdḡān is placed by Grätz (V³ 190, cf. 447) at 800. This is certainly too late. Yūdḡān who was Abū ʿĪsa's disciple must have succeeded his master immediately.

¹¹⁹ See *supra* p. 208.

¹²⁰ See later.

¹²¹ p. 311, 25.

¹²² This is meant by Hadassi when he clumsily says (p. 41^e) מַעַם דְּבָרֵי בְנֵי בִי רַב מַחֲזִיקִים הֵם כְּנֻבּוֹאָה. On the conception underlying this excessive veneration see later.

cept the general spirit of the age which, as a result of the mixture of cultures, was characterized by scepticism and a marked tendency to schism. Jewish sectarianism of the type of Abū 'Īsa, while retaining the main elements of Judaism, is deeply influenced by the non-Jewish environment and is indebted to it for many of its characteristics.

We will now proceed to examine these characteristics and to illustrate by some striking examples the rôle of Shiitic elements in Jewish sectarianism.

(To be continued)